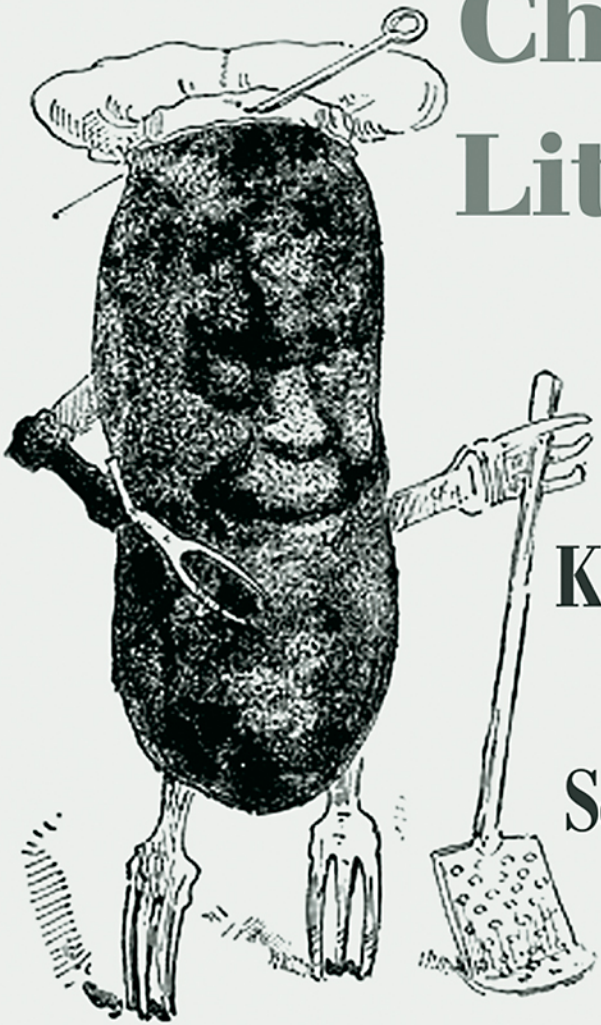
Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature



Edited by

Kara K. Keeling

and

Scott T. Pollard

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO FOOD IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Children's Literature and Culture
Jack Zipes, *Series Editor*

Pinocchio Goes Postmodern
Perils of a Puppet in the United States
by Richard Wunderlich and Thomas J. Morrissey

Little Women and the Feminist Imagination
Criticism, Controversy, Personal Essays
edited by Janice M. Alberghene and Beverly Lyon Clark

The Presence of the Past
Memory, Heritage, and Childhood in Postwar Britain
by Valerie Krips

The Case of Peter Rabbit
Changing Conditions of Literature for Children
by Margaret Mackey

The Feminine Subject in Children's Literature
by Christine Wilkie-Stibbs

Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction
by Robyn McCallum

Recycling Red Riding Hood
by Sandra Beckett

The Poetics of Childhood
by Roni Natov

Voices of the Other
Children's Literature and the Postcolonial Context
edited by Roderick McGillis

Narrating Africa
George Henty and the Fiction of Empire
by Mawuena Kossi Logan

Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults
edited by Naomi J. Miller

Representing the Holocaust in Youth Literature
by Lydia Kokkola

Translating for Children
by Riitta Oittinen

Beatrix Potter
Writing in Code
by M. Daphne Kutzer

Children's Films
History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory
by Ian Wojcik-Andrews

Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults
edited by Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry

Transcending Boundaries
Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults
edited by Sandra L. Beckett

The Making of the Modern Child
Children's Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century
by Andrew O'Malley

How Picturebooks Work
by Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott

Brown Gold
Milestones of African American Children's Picture Books, 1845-2002
by Michelle H. Martin

Russell Hoban/Forty Years
Essays on His Writing for Children
by Alida Allison

Apartheid and Racism in South African Children's Literature
by Donnarae MacCann and Amadu Maddy

Empire's Children
Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books
by M. Daphne Kutzer

Constructing the Canon of Children's Literature
Beyond Library Walls and Ivory Towers
by Anne Lundin

Youth of Darkest England
Working Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire
by Troy Boone

Ursula K. Le Guin Beyond Genre
Fiction for Children and Adults
by Mike Cadden

Twice-Told Children's Tales
edited by Betty Greenway

Diana Wynne Jones
The Fantastic Tradition and Children's Literature
by Farah Mendlesohn

Childhood and Children's Books in Early Modern Europe, 1550-1800
edited by Andrea Immel and Michael Witmore

Voracious Children
Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature
by Carolyn Daniel

National Character in South African Children's Literature
by Elwyn Jenkins

Myth, Symbol, and Meaning in Mary Poppins
The Governess as Provocateur
by Georgia Grilli

A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Vol. 1 & 2
by Penny Brown

Once Upon a Time in a Different World
Issues and Ideas in African American Children's Literature
by Neal A. Lester

The Gothic in Children's Literature
Haunting the Borders
edited by Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, and Roderick McGillis

Reading Victorian Schoolrooms
Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction
by Elizabeth Gargano

Soon Come Home to This Island
West Indians in British Children's Literature
by Karen Sands-O'Connor

Boys in Children's Literature and Popular Culture
Masculinity, Abjection, and the Fictional Child
by Annette Wannamaker

Into the Closet
Cross-dressing and the Gendered Body in Children's Literature
by Victoria Flanagan

Russian Children's Literature and Culture
edited by Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova

The Outside Child In and Out of the Book
by Christine Wilkie-Stibbs

Representing Africa in Children's Literature
Old and New Ways of Seeing
by Vivian Yenika-Agbaw

The Fantasy of Family
Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature and the Myth of the Domestic Ideal
by Liz Thiel

From Nursery Rhymes to Nationhood
Children's Literature and the Construction of Canadian Identity
by Elizabeth A. Galway

The Family in English Children's Literature
by Ann Alston

Enterprising Youth
Social Values and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century American Children's Literature
by Monika Elbert

Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism
by Alison Waller

Crossover Fiction
Global and Historical Perspectives
by Sandra L. Beckett

The Crossover Novel
Contemporary Children's Fiction and Its Adult Readership
by Rachel Falconer

Shakespeare in Children's Literature
Gender and Cultural Capital
by Erica Hateley

Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature
edited by Kara K. Keeling and Scott T. Pollard

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO FOOD IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

EDITED BY KARA K. KEELING
AND SCOTT T. POLLARD

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2009
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Critical approaches to food in children's literature / edited by Kara K. Keeling and Scott T. Pollard.
p. cm.—(Children's literature and culture ; 59)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Children's literature—History and criticism. 2. Food in literature. I. Keeling, Kara K. II. Pollard, Scott T.
PN1009.5.F66C75 2009
809'.89282—dc22
2008017665

ISBN 0-203-88891-X Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0-415-96366-4 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-203-88891-X (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-96366-4 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-88891-9 (ebk)

Contents

Series Editor's Foreword

Dedicated to furthering original research in children's literature and culture, the Children's Literature and Culture series includes monographs on individual authors and illustrators, historical examinations of different periods, literary analyses of genres, and comparative studies on literature and the mass media. The series is international in scope and is intended to encourage innovative research in children's literature with a focus on interdisciplinary methodology.

Children's literature and culture are understood in the broadest sense of the term "children" to encompass the period of childhood up through adolescence. Owing to the fact that the notion of childhood has changed so much since the origination of children's literature, this Routledge series is particularly concerned with transformations in children's culture and how they have affected the representation and socialization of children. While the emphasis of the series is on children's literature, all types of studies that deal with children's radio, film, television, and art are included in an endeavor to grasp the aesthetics and values of children's culture. Not only have there been momentous changes in children's culture in the last fifty years, but there have been radical shifts in the scholarship that deals with these changes. In this regard, the goal of the Children's Literature and Culture series is to enhance research in this field and, at the same time, point to new directions that bring together the best scholarly work throughout the world.

Jack Zipes

Acknowledgments

We owe thanks for this project in many quarters. At Christopher Newport University, we would like to express our appreciation to our successive department chairs, Tracey Schwarze and Jean Filetti, for their support of this project. Thanks are also due to Douglas Gordon as the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Provost Richard Summerville, and the Christopher Newport University Faculty Senate for their support in the form of faculty development grants and sabbaticals, without which completion of this project would have been impossible.

We would also like to thank our colleagues in the field of children's literature. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the Children's Literature Association for having chosen our proposal for a special session on Food and Children's Literature for the 2004 Modern Language Association Conference in Philadelphia, and to the many colleagues who attended that session and gave feedback to the scholars who presented papers there. We are particularly grateful to Jan Susina, who generously referred Routledge to us and us to Routledge to carry the project on from that session to book form. Also, we would like to extend a very special thank you to Margaret Mackey, who first suggested to us that a single article on food in Maurice Sendak's work had further possibilities as a topic for longer study.

We are very grateful to our editors at Routledge: Matthew J. Byrnie, who first commissioned the project; Max Novick, who helped us get started; Erica Wetter, who has seen the manuscript through the publication process and patiently answered many questions; and Jack Zipes, the general editor of the series of which this book is a part, who has done so much to extend scholarship in the field of children's literature.

Finally, we would like to thank all our contributors: Genny Ballard, Holly Blackford, Winnie Chan, Lan Dong, James Everett, Leona Fisher, Lisa Rowe Fraustino, Elizabeth Gargano, Robert M. Kachur, Jacqueline M. Labbe, Karen Hill McNamara, Martha Satz, Jodie Slowthower, Jan Susina, Richard Vernon, Annette Wannamaker, and Jean Webb. They have all been enthusiastic with their contributions and patient with the many inquiries required to put this volume together.

Part I
Introduction

Chapter One
Introduction: Food in Children's Literature

Kara K. Keeling and Scott T. Pollard

Food Is Everywhere

> But he struck his chest and curbed his fighting heart:
> "Bear up, old heart! You've borne worse, far worse,
> that day when the Cyclops, man-mountain, bolted
> your hardy comrades down. But you held fast—
> Nobody but your cunning pulled you through
> the monster's cave you thought would be your death."
>
> So he forced his spirit into submission,
> the rage in his breast reined back—unswerving,
> all endurance. But he himself kept tossing, turning,
> intent as a cook before some white-hot blazing fire
> who rolls his sizzling sausage back and forth,
> packed with fat and blood—keen to broil it quickly,
> tossing, turning it, this way, that way.
>
> (Homer, ***The Odyssey***, Book 20, lines 20–31)

At the beginning of Book 20, Odysseus cannot sleep for the anger that he feels. An insomniac lying in the entranceway of his own house, he is tempted to simply rise up and attack the suitors then and there, disgusted by their abuse of his household (e.g., the butchering of Odysseus's stock of pigs and hogs for their perpetual feasting), but he represses that urge in order to give his cunning the time it needs to devise an attack. He thinks about an analogous moment—Polyphemous eating his crew—when he successfully strategized

and executed a plan to save himself and the rest of his men from becoming food. Food leads to food. His anger successfully repressed (food memory as defense mechanism), Odysseus will not let it die out, though, and he keeps himself awake, "tossing, turning." At which point, Homer introduces another food moment, this time as a simile. Odysseus is the cook grilling the sausage, which is also Odysseus, "tossing, turning." He is the cook and the cooked, subject and object, a closed circuit meant to embody Odysseus's management of his anger. As with all cooks, the keys to his success are ingredients, heat, and timing. The cook Odysseus has a hot fire and a well-stuffed sausage, and he has the skill "to broil it quickly" (but not too quickly) in order to serve up his anger to the suitors, with the "fat and blood" at its peak, ready to burst out of the skin. But Odysseus's fire is too hot, and Athena appears to cool his anger and assure him of his revenge:

> Even if fifty bands of mortal fighters
> Closed around us, hot to kill us off in battle,
> Still you could drive away their herds and sleek flocks. (lines 49–51)

Odysseus is promised that he will control the suitors' food stocks. In fifty-one lines, in the lead-up to the climax of *The Odyssey*, the slaying of the suitors, food and food preparation dominate Homer's language as he attempts to capture Odysseus's mindset.

We see here in one of the earliest texts of world literature the integral role of food as cultural signifier, not only the product of a culture but one that gives shape to the *mentalités* that structure thought and expression. The presence of food, food production, and scenes of eating and feasting—all thread through the epic. One can read the epic as an adventure tale, but food is fundamental to the plot and to character interactions, to the very propelling of the adventure forward throughout the story: the ritual barbecues, the feasts, the slaughtering of bulls and pigs and sheep and, occasionally, humans. Polyphemous, whom Odysseus remembers at this crucial moment, kills and eats Odysseus's crew, but until Odysseus's arrival he is primarily a dairy farmer who raises sheep for their milk, out of which he makes cheese. He is a pastoralist who inexplicably turns cannibal.

Readers can take literature from practically any period or cultural tradition and do this kind of analysis about food. In *Gilgamesh,* Enkidu is inducted into civilization through eating cooked food. In *The Iliad*, Priam and Achilles negotiate the release of Hector's body over a meal. In *The Metamorphoses*, Ovid advocates vegetarianism. In the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer distinguishes the Prioress from the other pilgrims by her delight in good manners, signified by her dainty eating habits. In *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais delights in using food as a positive sign of excess for the vast intellectual and physical capacities of his main characters. Gustave Flaubert spends an entire chapter on the wedding feast in *Madame Bovary*. Marcel

Proust's six-volume *Remembrance of Things Past* is launched by the memory of a cookie.

These are just a few examples; more will occur to any thoughtful reader who reviews his or her repertoire of texts, including those read in childhood. Food is as prevalent and significant in children's literature as it is in literature for any other audience. Taking, for example, Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen*, Mickey's situation is similar to that of Odysseus: Mickey too is an outsider trying to find his way in. Although he is not angry, as Odysseus is, he is still frustrated at his subordinate, marginalized social position. Whereas Odysseus feels homicidal because his rightful position of power has been usurped, Mickey quests for a new position of power. It is through food—through negotiating his liminal position of cook and almost cooked—that Mickey succeeds. Mickey does not live in a world of threatening suitors; rather, he inhabits a fantastic dreamscape of early twentieth-century commercially prepared staples (bottles of cream of tartar and baking soda, bags of sugar and flour, containers of salt, yeast, and coffee), a dreamscape created from the adult world from which he has so far been excluded. He desires to be coequal with these avatars of the adult world, and it is as both prepared food and as food preparer that Mickey dreams his inclusion. To mix our metaphors, it is in his ability to walk the fine line between those roles that Mickey is able to embrace his rightful position as consumer of a product of whose production he has dreamed himself a part. In the end he has become the knowledgeable consumer who understands from where this food comes and how it is made. As the final illustration of the book suggests, as hero of the tale Mickey becomes the brand, the Mickey-cake, that everyone eats, achieving power not through homicide but through economic ingenuity, through the negotiation and navigation of a food production and distribution system.

Food Is Fundamental to Literature

> Food is important. In fact, nothing is more basic. Food is the first of the essentials of life, our biggest industry, our biggest export, and our most frequently indulged pleasure. Food means creativity and diversity. As a species, humans are omnivores; we have tried to eat virtually everything on the globe, and our ability to turn a remarkable array of raw substances into cooked dishes, meals, and feasts is evidence of astounding versatility, adaptability, and aesthetic ingenuity. (Belasco viii)

If food is fundamental to life and a substance upon which civilizations and cultures have built themselves, then food is also fundamental to the imagination and the imaginary arts. Food is fundamental to the imagination, because food is fundamental to culture, or as Massimo Montanari puts it in the title of his latest book, *Food Is Culture*. If food were plain—if it were nothing more

than bland nutrition—perhaps we could leave it to the scientists and technicians to know how nutrition works and to deliver it more efficiently, in pills, for example. But food is seldom plain. Cultures and civilizations will not leave it alone. Cultures elaborate it, not simply as Lévi-Strauss speaks of "elaboration" in "The Culinary Triangle"—the transformation of food from the raw to the cooked—but through its inclusion in cultural rituals, its purpose as cultural signifier, its central position in the creation of culture. Food is also essential to the cultural imagination, or the imagination period. Thus food proliferates as the product of the imagination. As we have already indicated above, food and foodways are a constant thread in literature. Food can be epic in scope, and it can be intimate. It can give bent to joy or anger or mark humankind's mortality.

Food has not always been deemed a subject worthy of literary study, despite its omnipresence in literature. In his autobiography, *The Apprentice*, Jacques Pépin recollects his desire as a graduate student in the 1970s to write his doctoral dissertation on Flaubert's description of the wedding feast in *Madame Bovary*, but his advisor in the French Department at Columbia nixed the idea, telling Pépin "the reason not much has been written on the topic . . . is that cuisine is not a serious art form. It's far too trivial for academic study. Not intellectual enough to form the basis of a Ph.D. thesis." The rejection of his proposal pushed Pépin out of an academic career and back into his first love of food preparation as a chef (Pépin 212). But by 1984 one finds James Brown noting in *Fictional Meals and Their Function in the French Novel: 1789–1848* that "Fictional meals are above all literary signs: consequently they are subject to the same kinds of analysis as any other literary phenomenon" (3).

To better understand the potential for studying food in literature, a brief overview of the development of food studies in the last century is needed. The three fields that have been the primary contributors to food studies have been social sciences (anthropology, sociology, and history), though the field is inherently interdisciplinary and has come to include the arts and humanities as well. But there is little sense of food studies as an interdisciplinary field of its own until long after studies of food had developed in the individual disciplines. Thus in 1999 the field still seems very new, and a certain defensiveness is still noticeable in its early practitioners. In his review of the field that year, "Why Food Matters," Warren Belasco, an influential scholar in the development of food studies, admits his defensiveness about the scholarship he does, noting the "bemused wonder" of other academics in reaction to his work. But Belasco also shows the breadth of the developing field, offering a bibliography of sixty-eight works from the 1920s onwards that covers multiple fields and many varieties of writing, ranging from the impact of food on body image to food history to cookbooks and gastronomic literature. In 2002 an even more comprehensive literature review of food studies, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," was published. In it Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois observe "the staggering increase in the scale of food literature—inside and outside

anthropology" (111). They claim that food studies in anthropology began at the end of the nineteenth century but developed most significantly after Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mary Douglas wrote about food and foodways in the mid-1960s. The important turning point came, though, in 1982 with the publication of Jack Goody's *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, after which work in the anthropology of food grew exponentially. Mintz and Du Bois's bibliography cites 233 articles and books on food and foodways; clearly this had already become a productive subfield that has only continued to develop since then. They argue that there are three major trends responsible for the growth of food scholarship: "globalization; the general affluence of Western societies and their growing cosmopolitanism; and the inclusivist tendencies of U.S. society which spurs . . . disciplines . . . and professions, such as journalism and business . . . to consider cross-cultural variations in foodways" (111).

In the field of history, food becomes an important focus with the French historian Fernand Braudel and the French *Annales* school of history. In *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, the first volume of his three-volume history, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th–18th Century*, Braudel focuses on the material components of the lives of ordinary people (as opposed to the Great Man or political theories of history), in which he has chapters on bread, rice, maize, potatoes, eating habits, etcetera. Stephen Mennell, in the introduction to *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, notes that Braudel called for a history of food in 1961 (17). Since then, a variety of comprehensive food histories have been written, most notably Reay Tannahill's *Food and History* (1973), Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat's *History of Food* (1987), Jean-Louis Flandrin, et al.'s *Food: A Culinary History* (1996), and Felipe Fernández-Armesto's *Near a Thousand Tables: A Brief History of Food* (2002). A number of histories of specific foods, such as Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1986) and Mark Kurlansky's *Salt: A World History* (2002), have received popular acclaim.

A key moment in the development of food studies in the humanities was the founding of *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, which began publishing in 2001. Although other publications devoted to food existed (*Food, Culture & Society* and *Food History News*), they were oriented toward social sciences rather than the arts and humanities. *Gastronomica*'s stated goals include "promoting greater recognition and awareness for the field of food studies"; they explicitly proclaim food studies as an existing field of its own, deserving of its own journal, in which they feature a wide variety of interdisciplinary scholarly and general audience articles. Any issue may include pieces on art, photography, poetry, creative nonfiction, memoir, testimonial, restaurants, table manners, utensils, chef biographies, historical events, and current controversies, all of which explore the pervasiveness of food in cultures around the world and are captured under the umbrella of food studies. In reviewing all

the issues of *Gastronomica*, we find literature is the focus of a number of pieces. A scattering of titles includes "Roman Food Poems: A Modern Translation," "The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots, and Other Literary Fruits," and "Scenes of the Apple: Food and the Female Body in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Women's Writing"; these articles suggest food's omnipresence in literature, yet it remains an area ripe for analysis and commentary. *Gastronomica* has also given space to discussions about food in children's lives and children's culture. Among all the disciplines to which it gives voice, *Gastronomica* provides a central outlet for analyses of food in literature; this is much needed, given that although many analyses of food in literature are being produced, there is no strong venue devoted to the topic. The field is now at the point that we need studies exclusively devoted to food and literature.

Some of the most important literary and cultural theorists have addressed food and literature. Perhaps the most outstanding is Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World*, which Carolyn Korsmeyer in *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* sees as "Bakhtin's meditations" on food as "a metaphor for power" that focus particularly on Rabelais's "trope of appetite to ferocious excess" (188). In *Mythologies* Roland Barthes pursues semiotic analyses of food in chapters on "Wine and Milk," "Steak and Chips," and "Ornamental Cookery." Barthes uses his article "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" to develop a general semiotic theory of food and culture:

> For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior. (167)

In 1986, Louis Marin wrote *Food for Thought*, in which he develops the idea of the culinary sign through textual analyses of fairy tales, political and religious texts, and Rabelais. For Marin, the culinary sign is multivalent and connects to the methods by which society makes meaning, functioning as what Marin calls a trans-signifier—through metonymy, synecdoche, and metaphor—to facilitate movement among cultural discourses. Conversely, in 1982 Julia Kristeva speaks of food loathing as a means of deconstructing cultural signifying regimes in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Even in this very quick and selective review, we see how these four major theorists place food at the center of their cultural analyses.

A number of literary critics have also addressed the significance of food in literature; although good work has been done, it has largely been accomplished by writers without a clear sense of participating in a developing subfield. There are a few notable book-length studies of food in literature. James Brown's *Fictional Meals and Their Function in the French Novel: 1789–1848* (mentioned above) discusses the function of meals in

the works of Honoré Balzac, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert, and Eugene Sue. Gian-Paolo Biasin, in *The Flavors of Modernity: Food and the Novel*, which focuses on food in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italian novels, questions why the novel superimposes its own signifying system onto the signifying system of cooking and asks, why doesn't the sign system of cooking superimpose itself instead on the novel? He treats food and foodways as something other than a subordinate cultural expression; instead he sees them as powerful creators of cultural meaning, which he explores by treating the novel's and food's signifying powers as equivalent and thus interdependent. Like Biasin, Allen Weiss argues for the equivalency of food and aesthetics as cultural signifiers in his *Feast and Folly: Cuisine, Intoxication and the Poetics of the Sublime*, producing a gastronomic aesthetic theory while focusing primarily on nineteenth- and twentieth-century French texts: "Taste (culinary and otherwise) constitutes a sign of individual style, a mode of constituting the self, a mark of social position, an aesthetic gesture" (85).

Much article-length work on the role of food in literature has been done; articles are, not surprisingly, much more the norm for the young field. The most notable critic for our purposes is Mervyn Nicholson, who has three articles that bridge adult and children's literature: "Food and Power: Homer, Carroll, Atwood and Others," "Magic Food, Compulsive Eating, and Power Poetics," and "The Scene of Eating and the Semiosis of the Invisible." Nicholson analyzes issues of power relations, violence, and transformation through food and eating in works such as Homer's *The Odyssey*, Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. For readers interested in other articles in the field, we recommend the one book-length bibliography of food in literature: Norman Kiell's *Food and Drink in Literature: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography* (published in 1995 and thus now somewhat out of date). Kiell gives a substantial annotated list of both books and articles; much more critical work has been done in the past thirteen years, however.

In our research we have also noted the presence of analyses of food in literature in interdisciplinary texts such as Carolyn Korsmeyer's *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* and Michael Symons's *A History of Cooks and Cooking*. Although food in literature is not their primary focus, nor are they conventional literary critics, both Korsmeyer and Symons include discussions of literary texts in their cultural analyses: Korsmeyer on meals in Melville's *Moby Dick*, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and Dinesen's "Babette's Feast," and Symons on women novelists who feature cooks and cooking. We find Symons interesting because he features both historical children's authors (Susan Coolidge, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Louisa May Alcott, L. M. Montgomery) along with contemporary women writers (Laura Esquivel and Nora Ephron).

Food Is Fundamental to Children's Literature

As Nicholson and Symons demonstrate, just as food studies is becoming more important in general literary studies, so too is it becoming important in the field of children's literature. Whether in memoir, fiction, or poetry, writers continually hark back to childhood experiences of food, even when the intended audience is adults rather than children, as with Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Food experiences form part of the daily texture of every child's life from birth onwards, as any adult who cares for children is highly aware; thus it is hardly surprising that food is a constantly recurring motif in literature written for children.

In children's literature scholarship, there have been a few important investigations of food, eating, and manners. Wendy Katz's 1980 article, "Some Uses of Food in Children's Literature," is both one of the first and one of the best general discussions of food in children's literature. Katz's thesis is that to understand the relationship between children and food is to understand the world of the young. Katz illustrates her points with brief analyses of a number of texts: *Alice in Wonderland*; *The Wind in the Willows*; *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; *The Hobbit*; *Anne of Green Gables*; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *Nobody's Family Is Going to Change*; and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* In this short overview of the subject, she identifies a number of themes as they apply to particular texts: civilization, community, identity, emotional stability, meals and food events, empowerment. This early article offers short takes on important thematic ideas that can be further developed within the new context of food studies.

Unlike Katz, J. Ellen Gainor offers a single-work study in her 1992 article "'The Slow-Eater-Tiny-Bite-Taker': An Eating Disorder in Betty McDonald's *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*." Gainor's research is primarily focused on male anorexia: the issues of control, identity, and social integration. She focuses on the character of Allen, a boy who alarms his mother by eating less and less, more and more slowly. Gainor looks at table manners as therapy; both society and the child define their relationship to one another through eating and the ways food is consumed. A reading of Gainor's analysis reveals food in this story as a way of understanding character and redefining social relations. The table is a locus of socialization from which Allen isolates himself, and it is Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle who uses that same table, the food served on it, and the table setting to normalize his behavior and reintegrate him into society. Gainor's essay is useful because she widens the scope of literary inquiry beyond food itself to the nexus of manners of consumption.

In the 1990 article, "Maurice Sendak's Ritual Cooking of the Child in Three Tableaux: The Moon, Mother, and Music," Jean Perrot uses Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan against Sendak's own background in psychoanalysis to discuss a variety of Sendak's texts, from *Kenny's Window* to *Outside Over There*. Perrot sees a parallel between Lévi-Strauss's food texts (*The*

Raw and the Cooked and *The Naked Man*) and Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and *In the Night Kitchen*, in that both Lévi-Strauss and Sendak see food as a primary engine in the civilizing process. Perrot consistently frames his analysis of Mickey, the protagonist of *In the Night Kitchen*, with Lévi-Strauss's understanding of cooking as a civilizing trope. For example, Perrot quotes Lévi-Strauss to support his point that "Mickey completes the culinary operations necessary 'as mediatory activities between heaven and earth, life and death, nature and nurture' (Lévi-Strauss, *Raw* 65)" (Perrot 72–73). Perrot represents a significant shift to an approach that utilizes literary theory as a way of discussing the role food plays in children's literature.

Maria Nikolajeva, in *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature*, also uses sophisticated theoretical approaches. Although the obvious focus of her 2000 book is the issue of time, she includes an important chapter on food as a means of measuring time: "An Excursus on Significant Meals." Using a variety of theorists from various disciplines (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Carl Jung, Vladimir Propp, and Algirdas Julien Greimas), Nikolajeva reads children's literature as mythic and rejects the notion of realistic fiction. Children's literature functions off the deep structures (mythic, archetypal) embedded in it. She links literary analysis with a mythic hermeneutic, which provides her a closed world of interpretation: known patterns and known symbols. Within that hermeneutic, the consumption of food in human societies functions as significant, ritualized temporal markers that integrate the child into the community (echoing Perrot's Lévi-Straussian analysis of the process by which Mickey becomes civilized). In later chapters, she discusses food in a number of important children's books, including Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Linklater's *The Wind of the Moon*, Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Lewis's Narnia books, and Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, *Mio my Son*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter.*

Our own first article on food in children's literature, "Power, Food and Eating in Maurice Sendak and Henrik Drescher: *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *The Boy Who Ate Around*" (1999), shows an incipient awareness of the young field of food studies, using the Douglas, Brown, Mennell, and Kristeva texts cited above to discuss the socialization process of table rituals and the means by which Sendak's and Drescher's child protagonists use food consumption as a means of rebellion and self-empowerment. Our 2002 article on Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, "In Search of His Father's Garden," takes a similar approach but also displays a greater awareness of food studies as a field, citing the above-mentioned Barthes, Fisher, Mennell, and Korsmeyer texts. Additionally, we employed the centerpiece of nineteenth-century British middle-class food life, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, as well as Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil's *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food and Society* and Deane W. Curtin's "Food/Body/Person." Now, in retrospect, our articles seem to be in the mainstream of how children's literature scholars were beginning to integrate critical theory and food studies into analyses of children's literature.

In the literature review that begins her 2002 article, "'What Is the Meaning of All This Gluttony?': Edgeworth, the Victorians, C. S. Lewis and a Taste for Fantasy," Lynne Vallone captures the nascent scholarship of food in children's literature, demonstrating an awareness of not only the work on the topic done in the field of children's literature by Katz and Nikolajeva but also roving more broadly through available scholarship, citing Gian-Paolo Biasin's *The Flavors of Modernity: Food and the Novel*, and even an early example of food studies in the humanities, Margaret Visser's *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners*. Whereas Katz uses food as a tool for social analysis to define the child's world, Nikolajeva and Perrot speak to how the child is integrated into the larger adult community using myth criticism. Vallone, constructing food as metaphor, demonstrates a shift from didactic Victorian beliefs in self-restraint of good children "in terms of what is eaten, when, how much, and in what manner" as a means of social integration into the adult world to Lewis Carroll's and C. S. Lewis's rejection of "the sterility of the adult community" in favor of a redefined community of wholesome pleasure that leaves children freer to define their relationship to food (53).

Carolyn Daniel has written the longest study of food in children's literature so far. Her 2006 book *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature* covers a vast number of children's texts chiefly from the Anglo-Australian tradition. Daniel has done an enormous amount of research and uses most of the children's literature and food scholars mentioned above. Most importantly, she references authors who are important in the field of food studies: Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Mary Douglas, Norbert Elias, Peter Farb, Sidney Mintz, Pierre Bourdieu, and Margaret Visser. Thus she contextualizes her discussion of children's literature within a larger interdisciplinary frame than we have yet seen. The book is trenchantly feminist; Daniel comes to the conclusion that no text can find freedom from or negotiate a space outside the patriarchal monoculture. Basing her work on Lévi-Strauss and Judith Butler, Daniel employs various binaries (adult/child, male/female, boy/girl, good/bad, food/nonfood, human/nonhuman, order/disorder, civilization/barbarity), all of which feed into an overarching binary of patriarchy and its Other. Through these binaries, Daniel portrays power relations in children's texts and how food, eating, and manners act as signifiers that reflect the larger ideological structure of society. The Other (most often female) represents the desire to counter patriarchy and its array of powerful social forces, but inevitably patriarchy (embodied today in the commodity-driven globalized corporate culture) wins. Like Nikolajeva and Perrot, Daniel sees food in children's literature as a means to socialization:

> As far as adult culture is concerned, children must internalize very precise rules about how to maintain a "clean and proper" body, what to relegate to abjection, and how to perform properly in social situations.

> Children must also learn all sorts of rules about food and eating. Most important—they must know who eats whom. Food events in children's literature are clearly intended to teach children how to be human. (12)

But whereas Vallone sees the possibility that children's literature can negotiate a space for the child outside the dominant culture, Daniel sees patriarchal domination as nearly all encompassing, an event horizon from which texts, readers, and authors have great difficulty escaping.

Published in a variety of venues over the past twenty-six years, these works of children's literature scholarship demonstrate an uncanny likeness to the interdisciplinary growth of food studies scholarship. All reflect the development of critical theory as analytical tool over the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, exploring with increasing sophistication food as a powerful and complex signifying force. All illuminate food as a prime cultural mover. Food makes things happen. It is acted upon (cooked, elaborated), but as a cultural force it also acts. The scholarship reviewed above is the groundwork upon which this volume is built. This book is the first collection of essays on food and children's literature, and we hope that it becomes another important reference point in the development of the subfield. The impetus for this volume came from a 2004 Modern Language Association conference special session on the topic of food and children's literature, sponsored by the Children's Literature Association and chaired by the editors of this volume. The session was quite successful, attracting an amazing number of superb submissions, of which only four could be used for the session. Many of the participants asked if we would consider putting together a scholarly volume on the topic. Looking again at the other submissions, we came to the conclusion that we had the material for a very strong and diverse collection, and we agreed to move forward.

The volume includes seventeen scholars from both inside and outside the field of Anglo-American children's literature. From inside, there are essays from a new scholar (Elizabeth Gargano); people well established in the field (Holly Blackford, Leona Fisher, Lisa Rowe Fraustino, Jan Susina, Annette Wannamaker); and a senior scholar (Jean Webb). From outside, the volume features a variety of scholars with specializations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British literature (James Everett, Robert Kachur, Jacqueline Labbe, Winnie Chan); another set with global/multicultural foci (Genny Ballard, Lan Dong, Karen McNamara, Richard Vernon); and Jodi Slothower, an independent scholar, cookbook writer, and collector of children's cookbooks. The volume also features an essay by Martha Satz, who contributed an essay, "The Death of the Buddenbrooks: Four Rich Meals a Day," to one of the early, seminal volumes in food studies, *Disorderly Eaters: Texts of Self-Empowerment* (Furst and Graham 1992). For the Anglo-American tradition, we include essays that cover texts from the nineteenth century to the contemporary period. The volume also includes essays on United States multicultural (Asian American)

and international children's literature (Brazil, Ireland, Mexico). In terms of genre, the essays discuss picture books, chapter books, popular media and children's cookbooks, and the contributors utilize a variety of approaches: archival research, culture studies, feminism, formalism, gender studies, material culture, metaphysics, popular culture, postcolonialism, post-structuralism, race, structuralism, and theology. As with the prior scholarship touched upon above, the essays in this volume not only look at food as a viable entré to social, cultural, and literary analysis but, full of its own signifying regimes (not an empty vessel), food is a worthy study in and of itself as well as in how it shapes our view of that literature, culture, and society. It is the treatment of food as critical vehicle that distinguishes the scholarship of food, whatever the discipline. Again, food makes things happen.

The volume is organized in five parts to capture some (certainly not all) of the thematic similarities among the chapters, and an intrepid reader will discover other potential groupings. The parts are also meant to reflect issues regularly taken up by food studies (gender, body, globalization, identity). To begin the volume, in a way that emphasizes the inexorable textuality of food (perfect for a book on food and literature), is Part II, Reading as Cooking, which is represented by "Delicious Supplements: Literary Cookbooks as Additives to Children's Texts." Working from Susan J. Leonardi's 1989 *PMLA* essay, "Recipes for Reading," Jodie Slowthower and Jan Susina look at the phenomenon of children's literature cookbooks, exploring the relationship between the original text and the adjunct cookbook as well as the relationship between the books and their dual, adult and child, audiences. In considering the linked cooking and reading texts, and thus the relationship between cooking and reading, the authors also raise interesting issues of power and reception. The cookbooks shift the reading experience from simple passive consumption to empowering the readers to pursue a more interactive and engaged role with the books.

The chapters in Part III—Girls, Mothers, Children—examine gender and generational relations. In "Recipe for Reciprocity and Repression: The Politics of Cooking and Consumption in Girls' Coming-of-Age Literature," Holly Blackford analyzes the mythic and fairy-tale intertextuality of the representation of eating and cooking in girls' literature. Scenes of food production typically sort mother figures into divine sacrificial objects or evil witches, categories to which we can apply a psychoanalytic understanding of child development. Because women and their cooking cross many important boundaries, between raw and cooked, self and other, outside and inside, nature and culture, women's cooking holds both wonder and anxiety in their daughters' imaginations. In "The Apple of her Eye: The Mothering Ideology Fed by Bestselling Trade Picture Books," Lisa Rowe Fraustino reviews all-time best-selling trade picture books depicting mother–child relationships and examines how food is used, both literally and metaphorically, in the reproduction of mothering ideology as defined by feminist theorists, most pertinently Nancy Chodorow in her influential text *The Reproduction of Mothering*.

Part IV—Food and the Body—has two chapters on obesity and one that explores the blurring of the eater/eaten dichotomy vis-à-vis the child. In "Nancy Drew and the 'F' Word," Leona W. Fisher examines food as a central presence in the Nancy Drew novels from the mid-1930s onward. The essay argues that food functions in the series as a marker of class status, a domestic relief from the pressures of dangerous sleuthing, and a signifier of alternative feminine subjectivities (ranging from the "athlete" to the balanced leader to the "boy-crazy romantic"), concluding that the novels' contradictory representations of food illustrate both the series' overt conservatism as well as the implicit acknowledgment that (in Suzie Orbach's famous phrase) "fat is a feminist issue." In "To Eat and Be Eaten in Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature," Jacqueline Labbe discusses instances in Victorian children's literature when food transmutes from nourishment for the child's body to a metonym for the child's body, and when eating is less about satisfying corporeal needs than about symbolizing moral needs. Children's literature then both entertains young readers and implicitly threatens their existence: violence, fear, and the threat of death allow adults to ensure that their children will perform suitably, allowing the playfulness of "I'm going to eat you up" to assume a new and darker meaning. In "Voracious Appetites: The Construction of 'Fatness' in the Boy Hero in English Children's Literature," Jean Webb explores how nineteenth-century Muscular Christianity was a major influence on the construction of the hero in children's literature, establishing the strong athletic heroic image as a desirable role model. In parallel, the image of the sedentary obese child developed as an opposition, being the butt of bullying and a figure of fun.

The five chapters in Part V—Global/Multicultural/Postcolonial Food—have a worldwide reach, extending from Latin America to Europe to Asia. The first two chapters take up the topic of cross-cultural assimilation (or the lack thereof). In "'The Eaters of Everything': Etiquettes of Empire in Kipling's Narratives of Imperial Boys," Winnie Chan examines scenes of eating in Kipling's most influential tales of imperial boys as they developed and acquired an increasingly necessary etiquette of Empire. In "Eating Different, Looking Different: Food in Asian American Childhood," Lan Dong uses Donna Gabaccia's theory from *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (1998) on the intersection between ethnic food and ethnic identity to analyze how food functions as a complex signifier for Asian American children's struggle over identity construction. In "The Potato Eaters: Food Collection in Irish Famine Literature for Children," Karen MacNamara examines the use of food (and its lack) as a complex signifier for socialization and identity construction in Irish Famine texts written for children, arguing that they construct new cultural identities by dispelling feelings of survivor's guilt and shame. The last two essays in this section look at childhood and gender within a Latin context. In "The Keys to the Kitchen: Cooking and Latina Power in Latin(o) American Children's Stories," Genny Ballard explores how food in